

## Against the Grain

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### People Profile: David Taylor

Editor

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its plants in the USA and the UK. Our recent announcement of an entry into the French market in a joint venture with **Hachette** is an indication of strategic intent as well as a clear sign of the importance of POD as a publishing and distribution strategy for the second largest trade publisher in the world.

The shift from a supply chain based on preprinted inventory in regional distribution centres to one that is based on POD plus micro or virtual inventory will not be one that happens overnight. Publishers are typically sitting on very large amounts of books that they have printed. It is a very radical decision indeed to pulp inventory to allow a rapid move out of physical distribution and to a virtual POD based model. Such issues are what my American colleagues like to refer to as legacy issues. I know what they mean every time I go and watch the **Wolverhampton Wanderers** play football (soccer for US readers), and feel the weight of expectation on the team based on the fact that we won three League titles in the mid 1950s.

In addition to existing inventory of titles that could move to a POD model, there are also titles that do not currently fit current POD production capabilities. There is therefore a hybrid model of supply that is starting to emerge which combines the book distribution and warehousing of such titles allied to a POD supply model. As production capabilities improve, more titles come within the reach of POD powered virtual inventory and the publisher has a migration path to reduce the levels of physical inventory. Such a model requires a partner who has both POD and book distribution competencies.

Think about the applications of this model of supply in a market like Australia where many of the world's major publishers have warehouses full of books that they have printed offshore and shipped in. The size of the market and the costs of shipping and holding inventory means that there is a constant tension to both represent the range of a publisher's list, and to keep down costs. POD offers a very elegant solution for that market as it would allow local printing and fulfillment of titles, allowing publishers to not only save large sums of money on transportation and warehousing, but also to grow sales by being able to fulfill rapidly. Expect to see POD's role in that market to be substantive in the years ahead. Expect to see POD penetrate that market deeper and faster than any other solution to date.

There is no doubt that many of the world's biggest publishing groups are waking up to the true potential that POD represents. This is not about printing. It is really about allowing a fundamental shift in the way that publishers manage their business model. Once publishers stop having to worry about how many copies to print and how to get them into the market, I suspect that they will find it rather liberating. It will allow them to focus on the three things that are, it seems to me, at the heart of what publishing is about: finding and creat-

## against the grain people profile

### David Taylor

Senior Vice President, Content Acquisition, Ingram Content Group  
President, Lightning Source  
One Ingram Boulevard, La Vergne, TN 37086  
UK Phone: +44 845 121 4554 • US Phone: (615) 213 4400  
UK Fax: +44 845 121 4591 • US Fax: (615) 213 4425  
<david.taylor@ingramcontent.com> [www.ingramcontent.com](http://www.ingramcontent.com)

**BORN AND LIVED:** 1960. Wolverhampton, England. Now live in Freeland, Oxfordshire (about ten miles west of Oxford with an excellent pub).

**EARLY LIFE:** Grew up in Wolverhampton. **Reading University**, England, 1978-1982, BA and MA in English Literature.

**PROFESSIONAL CAREER AND ACTIVITIES:** 25 years of experience in the U.K. and international book trades in a wide range of senior management positions including online bookselling, retail bookselling and library supply. Started in bookselling in 1983. Former Director of **Blackwell's** international library supply business. Served on the Booksellers' Association of the UK and Ireland's Council for several years and a former Chairman of the College and University Bookseller's Group and the Internet Bookseller's Group, the latter of which I founded. Regular speaker at book trade conferences and have published a number of articles on the impact that new technologies are having on the book trade supply chain. Member of the Society of Bookmen. Diploma in Management Studies (1988) from the **University of Westminster** and an MBA (1992) from **Oxford Brookes University**.

**FAMILY:** Married to **Caroline**, two sons, **Harry** (19) and **George** (15).

**IN MY SPARE TIME:** My wife doesn't normally allow me to have any but when I do, watching **Wolverhampton Wanderers** football (soccer) club, taking my dog **Tara** on long country walks via old English pubs, reading, cycling, gardening, spending time with the family, Indian food, single malt whisky.

**FAVORITE BOOKS:** *The Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire* – **Edward Gibbon**. *The Trial* – **Franz Kafka**. 1984 – **George Orwell**. *Biggles Defies the Swastika* – **Captain W. E. Johns**. *The 39 Steps* – **John Buchan**. *The Lord of the Rings* – **JRR Tolkien**. *The Second World War* – **Winston Churchill**. *The Murder of Roger Ackroyd* – **Agatha Christie**. *The Outsider* – **Albert Camus**. *Mr Midshipman Hornblower* – **C. S. Forester**. *The Ambassadors* – **Henry James**. *The Stones of Venice* – **John Ruskin**. *Brideshead Revisited* – **E. Waugh**.

**PET PEEVES:** Management jargon. Pomposity. Animated powerpoint slides. Losing to Germany on penalties in the World Cup (soccer).

**PHILOSOPHY:** Never make the mistake of thinking you are always right. Never stop learning.

**MOST MEMORABLE CAREER ACHIEVEMENT:** Becoming President of **Lightning Source** in 2008.

**GOAL I HOPE TO ACHIEVE FIVE YEARS FROM NOW:** Personally – to have read **Proust's** *In Remembrance of Times Past*. Started it twice now!

Professionally – to have helped **Ingram Content Group** grow into a global player.

**HOW/WHERE DO I SEE THE INDUSTRY IN FIVE YEARS:** Content will be increasingly available in a wide variety of forms, both printed and electronic, and delivered to customers via service and distribution organizations who have a genuine global footprint. Print will remain the dominant form of delivery for the majority of titles that are published but the method of production and distribution will have shifted much more to an on demand model rather than one based upon printing for inventory and selling from that inventory. There will be many millions more books available for people to buy and read, largely thanks to the combination of mass digitization and a global print-on-demand model. The book will not be dead but will be available in lots of different formats. 🌱

ing content, adding value to it and selling it. The delivery of that content to its destination, whether in "e" or "p" format, is going to be increasingly outsourced to organizations with a global footprint with capabilities in POD,

book distribution and e-content distribution. And all of this, I would suggest, is good news for the book in whatever format you wish to read it in. 🌱